

Virginia Department of Social Services
Acceptable Use Policy
October 2, 2006

PURPOSE: To document the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) policy on acceptable use of the Internet, e-mail, and other electronic communications.

SCOPE: All VDSS employees, employees of local social service agencies, contractors, vendors, and volunteers and other persons and organizations that use VDSS sponsored Internet, email and other electronic communications.

**STATEMENTS
OF POLICY:**

General Statements:

1. All client identifiable information (e.g. Name, address, social security number, or telephone number) must be sent by secure means. Information sent between individuals located in the VDSS Staff Directory is considered to be sent by secure means. Information sent to anyone else is not secure and must be encrypted if it contains client identifiable information.
2. Internet, e-mail, and other electronic communication users should have no expectation of privacy in regards to any message, file, e-mail, image or data created, sent, retrieved or received when using VDSS equipment or access. VDSS reserves the right to monitor computer networks, electronic communication systems, and the Internet at any time, without notice, and without the user's permission.
3. Electronic records may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act and available for public distribution.
4. All individuals and organizations that use VDSS sponsored Internet, email and other electronic communications will abide by the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) Policy 1.75, "Use of Internet and Electronic Communication Systems."
(http://www.dhrm.state.va.us/hrpolicy/policy/pol1_75.pdf)
5. Users of VDSS networks are prohibited from knowingly disclosing or modifying any assigned or entrusted access control mechanism (such as: log-in identifiers, passwords, terminal identifiers, user identifiers, digital certificates, IP addresses, etc.) for any purpose other than those required to perform any authorized employment functions.
6. Electronic communication systems include computer systems,

the Internet, e-mail, mobile devices, and voice mail.

Internet Usage:

1. Acceptable use of the Internet consists of activities necessary to support the purpose, goals, and mission of the Virginia Department of Social Services and each user's authorized job functions.
2. The following statements, although not inclusive, define specific unacceptable uses:

- Accessing, downloading, printing, or storing sexually explicit material in violation of the *Code of Virginia*, §2.2-2827.

"Sexually explicit content" means (i) any description of or (ii) any picture, photograph, drawing, motion picture film, digital image or similar visual representation depicting sexual bestiality, a lewd exhibition of nudity, as nudity is defined in § [18.2-390](#), sexual excitement, sexual conduct or sadomasochistic abuse, as also defined in § [18.2-390](#), coprophilia, urophilia, or fetishism.

Except to the extent required in conjunction with a bona fide, agency-approved research project or other agency-approved undertaking, no agency employee shall utilize agency-owned or agency-leased computer equipment to access, download, print or store any information infrastructure files or services having sexually explicit content. Agency approvals shall be given in writing by agency heads, and any such approvals shall be available to the public under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ [2.2-3700](#)).

- Gambling.
- Use for private or personal gain.
- Use for illegal purpose or any communication that violates applicable laws and regulations.
- Use for product advertisement.
- To transmit threatening, obscene, or harassing materials.
- Unauthorized attempts to seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data or passwords belonging to other users.
- Interfering with or disrupting network users, services, or equipment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to, distribution of unsolicited advertising, intentional propagation of computer viruses, and using the network to gain unauthorized entry to any other machine accessible through the network.

- Knowingly uploading or downloading commercial software in violation of its copyright and/or licensing agreement.
- Listening to radio, TV and other types of broadcasts (e.g. Webcasts) that are not related to your job duties and do not have supervisory approval.
- Accessing email through your personal Internet Service Provider (e.g. AOL, Hotmail, Excitemail, etc.).
- Downloading or installing without the authorization of local management, VDSS security and Northrop Grumman
 - Copyrighted materials (e.g. Music and Movie files)
 - Games to include playing games over the Internet
 - Screen Savers
 - Peer to Peer file-sharing programs
 - Non-VDSS supported software

If there are any questions about allowable programs or materials on the VDSS network, please contact the VDSS Support Center at (800) 223-8846.

3. Occasional and incidental personal use of the Internet services provided by VDSS is permitted, providing such use does not violate any local agency or Commonwealth of Virginia policies, procedures or practices, interfere with the conduct of VDSS and local business or job performance (based on volume or frequency), involve solicitation or illegal activities, adversely affect the efficient operations of the agency's computer systems, harm the agency or the Commonwealth, or involve for-profit personal business.

This policy does not attempt to define all acceptable or unacceptable personal use. The above information is provided as a guideline. If the employee is unclear about acceptable personal use, they should seek the advice of their supervisor or director.

4. Tools have been implemented by VDSS which:

- Log Internet access.
- Monitor the Internet access and usage by individuals.

5. Users may remotely access their email from any personal computer. Users who remotely access any other agency resources will use only VDSS provided equipment configured, set up and maintained by VITA or Northrop Grumman technicians without modification. This requirement may be waived by VDSS during emergency situations. Access to network resources, including the Internet, will be via modem

dial-in and Virtual Private Networking (VPN).

E-mail Usage:

1. It is prohibited to use e-mail to harass anyone. Specifically, it is forbidden to:
 - Send large numbers of messages to an individual or a group;
 - Attempt to subscribe anyone else to mailing lists.
2. Any outbound e-mail sent using a VDSS or local agency e-mail account is to be considered as equivalent to a message sent on agency letterhead, therefore:
 - The content and tone of any such message must reflect the official responsibilities of the author;
 - Any untrue, prejudicial, misleading, obscene, racist, sexist, or other unprofessional remarks may make the organization liable for legal action and will be considered a breach of DHRM's Standards of Conduct Policy 1.60.
3. It is prohibited to send an e-mail using another's identity, an assumed name, or anonymously.
4. It is prohibited to use e-mail for the propagation of viruses, computer worms, Trojan Horses, and other malicious software.
5. If you receive abusive, harassing or threatening email, report the incident to the Security Unit at security@dss.virginia.gov. Do not respond to abusive harassing or threatening email.
6. If you receive suspicious email, delete it.
7. State VDSS workers use VITA's Exchange Email System. Local DSS workers use VDSS' Send Mail System. The VDSS Send Mail System has a 10 megabyte size limitation, and a 60-day retention period on the server.

Electronic Communications Usage:

1. It is prohibited to use electronic communication services for fraudulent, threatening, obscene, intimidating, defamatory, harassing, discriminatory, or otherwise unlawful messages.
2. Users are expected to be responsible and professional when using electronic communication services whether for personal or professional purposes.

Acceptance and Violation:

1. All users must acknowledge acceptance of and continuing compliance with this policy, including the *Code of Virginia, §2.2-2827*. Employees will further acknowledge that VDSS Policy for Acceptable Internet, E-Mail and Other Electronic Communications Usage may change from time to time and agree to abide by current and subsequent revisions of the policy. This acknowledgement will be made by all users by signing the Acknowledgement of Acceptable Internet, E-Mail and Other Electronic Communications Use (See: Attachment A) prior to their being granted Internet, e-mail and other electronic communication access via VDSS facilities.
2. Known instances of non-compliance with this policy should be reported to the employee's supervisor/manager and VDSS Security.
3. Violations of this Policy will be handled in accordance with DHRM's Standard of Conduct Policy 1.60. Disciplinary action will be determined on a case-by-case basis by appropriate department or local agency management, with sanctions up to/or including termination depending on the severity of the offense.

AUTHORITY

REFERENCE:

Code of Virginia, §2.2-2005, et seq.

(Powers and duties of the Chief Information Officer "CIO"
Virginia Information
Technologies Agency; "VITA")

Code of Virginia, §2.2-2009, et. seq.

(Additional duties of the CIO relating to security of government
databases)

Code of Virginia, §2.2-2827

(Restrictions on state employee access to information
infrastructure)

Code of Virginia, §2.2-1201.13

(Duties of the Department)

OTHER

REFERENCE:

DHRM Policy No. 1.75, Use of Internet and Electronic
Communication Systems
DHRM Policy 1.60, Standard of Conduct